



COVID-19 GUIDANCE TO NURSING PROGRAMS

The Missouri State Board of Nursing has received multiple inquiries regarding COVID-19 and potential impact on nursing schools.

Academic partners are working with their leaders to understand the public health impact of COVID-19, and how alternative/remote classroom education (distance learning) may be provided. Management of students who are concurrently employed in the healthcare domain is also of concern. The health and well-being of patients, students and faculty will remain the priority focus.

1. DOES THE BOARD OF NURSING HAVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NURSING SCHOOLS AT THIS TIME?

Program administrators and nursing faculty should use their professional judgment in planning and scheduling instructional experiences for nursing students. While it is important that educational experiences are conducted in a way that allows nursing students to meet course/clinical objectives and to continue to work toward achievement of program outcomes, patient, student and faculty safety should be at the forefront of decision making.

- A. As always, theory and clinical instruction must be safely and properly provided at all times. Proactive steps to prevent the spread of germs and to protect patients, students and faculty should be employed.
- B. Proper cleaning, sanitizing and disinfection procedures must be in place.
- C. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has published an [online listing](#) of disinfectant products approved for use against SARS-COV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. The EPA list and other EPA virus related information is available online at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- D. Faculty and staff should be trained on how to recognize symptoms of potential illness and what to do if they develop symptoms or come in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19. Free educational materials from [DHSS](#) and the [CDC](#) on identifying COVID-19 symptoms are available online.
- E. Procedures should be in place for students, faculty and staff to report potential symptoms or COVID-19 exposure to school and program directors. Management and staff should be trained on appropriate response measures, including, any quarantine requirements. The CDC recommends that workers stay home if they are feeling sick or have a sick family member in their home.
- F. Everyone should be properly trained on and use proper handwashing techniques. CDC handwashing recommendations are available online at [Handwashing | CDC](#).

2. DO MINIMUM STANDARDS ALLOW FOR UTILIZATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING AS WELL AS VIRTUAL/SIMULATED EXPERIENCES TO TEMPORARILY CONDUCT THEORY AND CLINICAL INSTRUCTION?

Several nursing programs have already converted to distance learning for didactic course work as well as virtual/simulated learning for their clinical instruction. While this may not be ideal and certainly requires development of some innovative strategies, it may be only option to continue nursing course work at this time.

Distance learning activities can provide theory instruction for students. Alternate virtual and simulated clinical experiences can be utilized to conduct clinical learning experiences. Faculty should keep in mind that learning experiences should be designed to meet course and clinical objectives. We are fortunate that our rules do not require a specific number of clinical hours; only that experiences are sufficient to meet course and clinical objectives.

Frontloading of theory instruction and a more concentrated clinical experience later in the semester may be considered, if applicable.

Innovative ways to use concentrated clinical check-offs to verify student learning/competency to avoid incompletes for courses interrupted by these issues may be also considered.

Utilization of comprehensive theory/clinical assignments that students can complete outside of school/at home may be utilized as well.

Utilization of Zoom/other virtual technology may be considered to complete the semester.

3. IS BOARD OF NURSING APPROVAL REQUIRED PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION OF TEMPORARILY DEPLOY DISTANCE LEARNING/ALTERNATE CLINICAL EXPERIENCES?

No. Approval prior to implementation is not required. Please send a very brief description of the changes to course delivery/conduction of alternate clinical experiences/innovations you utilize to meet learning objectives. Please include information about clinical sites that you are not able to utilize at this time. Tracking of solutions implemented to bridge constraints of the pandemic may inform changes to minimum standards in the future. At a minimum, we can develop a clearinghouse of solutions that can be shared with others and showcase the innovations in nursing programs.

Should any of the instructional changes be considered for permanent delivery of content/conduction of clinical experiences, then approval by the Board of Nursing is required.

4. WHAT IF THE UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OR CAREER CENTER DECIDES TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE?

Each nursing program should develop an instructional plan/adapted course schedules that would outline how students would finish course work and complete clinical requirements. There may be an option for nursing programs to continue virtual instruction for nursing students, if approved by the University, College or Career Center.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) has established a COVID-19 informational website that includes a variety of resources for the public and healthcare professionals, including:

- A [COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#) that includes information on symptoms and virus prevention
- CDC [Guidelines for Health Care Providers](#), and
- A CDC "Situation Summary" on COVID-19 facts and statistics.

The DHSS website is located at [COVID-19 Outbreak | Health & Senior Services \(mo.gov\)](#)

HOTLINE

DHSS has also established a statewide public hotline for citizens or providers needing guidance regarding COVID-19. The toll-free number is **877-435-8411**. The hotline is operated by medical professionals and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has also issued documentation and findings from the White House Coronavirus Task Force – <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

The CDC's guidance on keeping workplaces safe is accessible at [CDC's guidance for keeping the workplace safe](#).

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing has also issued recommendations to be considered -- https://www.aacnnursing.org/News-Information/COVID-19/AACN-Recommendations?utm_source=MagnetMail&utm_medium=email&utm_term=bibi.schultz@pr.mo.gov&utm_content=Consideration%20for%20COVID%2D19%20by%20AACN&utm_campaign=Considerations%20for%20COVID%2D19%20Preparedness%20and%20Response%20in%20U%2ES%2E%20Schools%20of%20Nursing